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For Immediate Release**COMMISSIONER STARKS COMMENTS ON
PRIVACY, EQUITY, AND CIVIL RIGHTS**

WASHINGTON, March 6, 2023—FCC Commissioner Geoffrey Starks today filed comments in response to an inquiry by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (“NTIA”) on how commercial data practices may lead to outsized harms for marginalized or disadvantaged communities. A copy of the Commissioner’s comments is attached.

The comments share three examples – each within a core area of FCC authority and expertise – where the use of commercial data practices has the potential to negatively affect minority and underserved communities:

- *Digital discrimination in broadband internet access.* Commenters in the FCC’s ongoing proceeding to prevent and eliminate digital discrimination of access have raised concerns that bias in the use of data related to deployment, upgrades, maintenance, marketing, and customer service may lead to minority communities being underserved or receiving less secure service.
- *Automated speech recognition and facial recognition.* Providers of IP-captioned telephone service are increasingly using automated speech recognition (“ASR”) to caption calls. Studies have shown that ASR systems make far more errors when transcribing the speech of people of color, mirroring the troubling bias algorithms that power facial recognition also exhibit.
- *Advertisements to protective groups.* Broadcast television is transitioning to a new transmission standard. Using the new standard, broadcasters will be able to collect substantial viewer data for the first time, which can be used for targeted advertising. Because the technology is developing, the FCC has the opportunity to ensure that broadcasters are responsible stewards of data from the outset.

These practices, and others like them, may implicate services outside the communications sector, and also have the effect of widening gaps in access to technology and other socioeconomic disparities. “My hope is that NTIA finds these examples illustrative as it examines the impact of these practices more broadly,” Commissioner Starks stated.

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*